

# Blue Grass *exchange*

A Partnership for Safe Chemical Weapons Destruction



Fall 2006

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Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant

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## Groundbreaking Marks the Start of Construction



Breaking ground on Oct. 2 at the future site of the pilot plant are, from left, Chris Haynes, Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass project manager; Jim Fritsche, Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant site project manager; Mike Parker, Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives program manager; U.S. Sen. Mitch McConnell; Col. Rick Mason, Blue Grass Army Depot commander; Lt. Col. Tom Closs, Blue Grass Chemical Activity commander; and Paul Wojciechowski, Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass deputy project manager.

Photo by Tim Webb

## Message From the Manager

### Marking the Start of Construction

By JIM FRITSCHÉ  
Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction  
Pilot Plant Site Project Manager



As 2006 comes to a close, the Blue Grass team has several project milestones to celebrate and build upon in the coming year.

Late this fall, project team members, community partners and stakeholders celebrated the Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (BGCAPP) Groundbreaking Open

House. We marked the start of construction of the last chemical weapons destruction plant in the United States. This accomplishment brings us one step closer to making our community a safer place.

#### Other News

- This fall, Blue Grass Army Depot (BGAD) and the systems contractor, Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass (BPBG), revised the Research, Development and Demonstration (RD&D) permit application for the BGCAPP project to incorporate cost saving design changes. Working closely with the Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection, the permittees, BGAD and BPBG, will host a public meeting on Dec. 12, from 7 – 9 p.m. at the Carl D. Perkins Building at Eastern Kentucky University.
- BPBG has notified the government of new personnel in a key position.

Roger Smith has been named to the position of design-build manager.

- As of press time, the BGCAPP team has completed 1.6 million hours without a lost time injury. This is an excellent achievement.
- The coming year will bring opportunity to the community as BPBG awards contracts for Phase II construction.

#### Mark Your Calendar

Your involvement is essential to the success of the project. Please share your views at the next meeting of the Chemical Destruction Community Advisory Board. The meeting will be held at **1:30 p.m. on Dec. 12** in the **Carl D. Perkins Building** at **Eastern Kentucky University**.

#### News Brief

The Department of Defense is continuing its review of the Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (BGCAPP) project and has indicated the project will receive a steady funding stream, according to Michael Parker, program manager for Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives, who briefed attendees of the Sept. 12 Chemical Destruction Community Advisory Board meeting.

The baseline funding currently under review is subject to congressional appropriations and would be allocated annually for fiscal years 2008-2013. Though schedule adjustments need to be made, the funds would ensure that the project continues to move forward. A final decision regarding specific funding levels is expected to be made in January 2007.



## Bechtel Operations Manager Brings Synergy to Program

“Approachable” is one of the first words people use to describe Joe Nemec, the 24-year Bechtel veteran recently named to be the company’s operations manager for its chemical demilitarization projects in Kentucky, Colorado and Maryland. “Thoughtful – a good listener – a problem solver,” those who know him invariably add – qualities perhaps matured through a 41-year professional career, 38 years of marriage, a son, three daughters and four grandchildren.



**Joe Nemec, operations manager for chemical demilitarization for Bechtel National Inc., has a new role but is no stranger to the chemical weapons destruction world.**

Until recently, Nemec, 63, was the Bechtel systems contractor project manager for the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant in Colorado. In his expanded role, the Montana native’s first priority is improving communications between

the projects and with government managers at all levels. “Critical lessons learned need to be integrated more quickly between the jobs,” he said. “Greater advantage needs to be taken of the wide experience of our joint venture and teaming partners. And, we must do a better job of anticipating the information our customer management team needs to make informed and timely decisions.”

Now based out of Bechtel National’s Frederick, Md., headquarters, Nemec is a principal vice president of the Bechtel Corporation and the company’s senior plant operations manager. Before his Colorado assignment where he was involved in a major re-design of the pilot plant there, he was the project manager for Bechtel Aberdeen, systems contractor for the Aberdeen Chemical Agent Disposal Facility. With the safe neutralization of more than 1,600 tons of mustard agent, Aberdeen became the first chemical destruction facility in the continental United States to complete its stockpile elimination mission. The facility is now undergoing decommission and closure.

Michael Parker, head of the Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives program responsible for the Kentucky and Colorado sites, and the Army’s Chemical Materials Agency, welcomed Nemec’s new role. “Joe brings us the full spectrum of experience – design, construction, systemization, successful plant operations, and now, at Aberdeen – plant closure. He knows what the client needs to be successful, and he knows that program success is based on the success of all parties.”

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*– Michael Parker  
Program Manager, Assembled  
Chemical Weapons Alternatives*

Summing up his role, Nemec said, “The benefit of having essentially the same systems contractor for three sites is in the synergy we can create between the projects. My job is to manage that synergy in a way that will maximize its positive effect on safety, environmental protection and cost savings in the face of so many pressing demands on the federal budget. Our government customer; the Pueblo, Blue Grass and Aberdeen communities – and ultimately the American people – deserve nothing less.”



**Joe Nemec, left, and Michael Parker, program manager for the Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives, confer at a recent Citizens’ Advisory Commission meeting in Pueblo, Colo.**

Photos by outreach team

## United We Stand: Beginning the Final Chapter in the History of American Chemical Warfare



Nearly 220 community members, project personnel and local and federal officials were welcomed by Jim Fritsche "to this historic Groundbreaking Open House where we begin closing the final chapter in the history of American chemical warfare." Fritsche, Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant site project manager, served as the emcee for the event, which was held on Oct. 28 at Eastern Kentucky University to mark the start of construction of the pilot plant. The chemical weapons stored at the Blue Grass Army Depot since the 1940s will be destroyed at the plant once it begins operations. *"United at home and around the world for safe chemical weapons destruction"* was the event theme, intended to represent the unity between state and national partners.



Keith Bullock of Berea College sings the National Anthem after the posting of the colors. "This rendition of the National Anthem was a particularly stirring one," said Michael Parker, program manager for the Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives. "It causes me to think beyond this immediate event today towards our fighting forces ... I ask everyone to ... seek God's protection for them so they can guard this country but come home safe."



A statue of Daniel Boone appears to watch with interest as guests arrive for the Groundbreaking Open House at Eastern Kentucky University's Keen Johnson Building.



During the ceremony, the audience viewed "A Safe Kentucky Home," a 10-minute "virtual groundbreaking" multimedia presentation that provides an overview of chemical weapons destruction efforts and the Blue Grass Army Depot. Here, the speakers watch the presentation from monitors installed on the stage edge.





Madison County resident Torie Derringer poses by a sign announcing the Groundbreaking Open House with her children, Jamie and Justin. Derringer's husband, Joe, works as a subcontracts formation specialist for Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass.



U.S. Sen. Mitch McConnell talks with Jean Reed, DoD special assistant for Chemical and Biological Defense and Chemical Demilitarization Programs, prior to the ceremony. At rear are Teresa Hill of the Kentucky Environmental and Public Protection Cabinet, and Michael Parker, program manager for the Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives.



Sgt. Dustin Epperson leads the Color Guard in the posting of the colors. The Guard is made up of soldiers from the 617th Military Police Company and Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 206th Chemical Battalion, both Richmond-based elements of the Kentucky Army National Guard. Specialist Robert Wayne Cameron, a member of the Color Guard, serves as a security guard at the Blue Grass Army Depot.



As other speakers look on, Gen. Benjamin Griffin, Commanding General, U.S. Army Materiel Command, takes his turn at the podium. "Nothing is more important than the destruction of these chemical weapons," he said. "This project is at the top of my list."

Photos by Tim Webb

## *Groundbreaking Open House Speakers: Notable & Quotable*

**Jim Fritsche, site project manager, Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant:** *"We have adopted 'United We Stand' as our theme for today's ceremony, but also as our goal for the life of this project. From country to Commonwealth to county to community, we are united in making our Kentucky home a safer place by the destruction of the Blue Grass chemical stockpile."*

**Michael Parker, program manager, Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives:** *"We come together from a united front – community, commercial interests, local elected officials, local regulators, federal officials, the Department of Defense, and the systems contractor. I pledge to continue that open and transparent approach."*

**U.S. Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky.:** *"This is indeed a day of great celebration. I pledge to you that ... we'll continue to make sure [this project] is a priority within the Pentagon budget and move as rapidly and safely as possible."*

**Gen. Benjamin Griffin, Commanding General, Army Materiel Command:** *"I understand the criticality of this community to the nation. I pledge to you that we will continue to work hand in hand with you on this critical task."*

**Jean Reed, special assistant for Chemical and Biological Defense and Chemical Demilitarization Programs, Office of the Secretary of Defense:** *"We will work in a united fashion as we ensure the safety of the public, workers and environment from the threat of chemical weapons."*

**Kent Clark, judge-executive, Madison County:** *"On behalf of everyone in Madison County, I'd like to thank Craig Williams for his undying [efforts] to educate us on the best way to [destroy the chemical weapons stockpile]."*

**Connie Lawson, mayor, City of Richmond:** *"The City of Richmond is committed to partnering with other agencies and organizations to move forward in the neutralization of the chemical weapons."*

**Teresa Hill, cabinet secretary, Kentucky Environmental and Public Protection Cabinet, reading from a letter written by Kentucky Gov. Ernie Fletcher:** *"Just as our Commonwealth stood united in maintaining a credible deterrent to chemical warfare, we now stand ready to work with local, state and federal officials to dispose of the [chemical] weapons that no longer need to be housed here."*

**Doug Hindman, chair, Kentucky Chemical Demilitarization Citizens' Advisory Commission:** *"We have worked, studied, debated, discussed – sometimes argued – in order to achieve the consensus that brings us here today. In the process, we've built relationships and understandings."*

**Craig Williams, co-chair, Chemical Destruction Community Advisory Board:** *"We've learned that cooperation, transparency, openness and free exchange of ideas ... is the recipe for a successful program."*

**Chris Haynes, project manager, Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass:** *"I'm honored to be here today to represent the systems contractor the government selected to design, build, systemize, operate and close the pilot plant facility."*

## Agents of Change: The Eubank Family

A paper napkin at the Blue Grass Army Depot dining facility made history three years ago for Tekoah Eubank, a supply technician at the depot, and her husband, Mike, a surety specialist for the Blue Grass Chemical Activity.

Strangers to each other at the time, Tekoah realized she had forgotten to grab a napkin as she went through the lunch line. As she approached the line again, Mike spotted her and asked, "Do you work here?"

"At first I was offended, thinking he meant the dining facility," Tekoah said. "But I thought he was cute and apologized later at the salad bar for being rude to him."

That was in 2003. Two years later, Mike and Tekoah were married. Bailey, 7, Mike's daughter from a previous marriage, plus a cocker spaniel, two cats, four fish and a groundhog round out the family.

The Eubanks still work at the depot. They received special recognition at the Oct. 28 Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant Groundbreaking Open House by Jim Fritsche, site project manager. "The unity of country and community that we proclaim here today begins in its most fundamental way with the family unit. I would like to acknowledge a special family – a family that represents our entire community in a most inspiring and positive way," Fritsche said.

"The depot is a wonderful place to work," Mike said. "It's enabled my wife and I to be on the same schedule, share camaraderie with others on post, and understand what each other does."

Tekoah, 31, appreciates the supportive atmosphere, including access to the gym, bowling league, pool, softball

all' is our motto. We embrace that as an organization."

Mike, 32, has been a Guardsman with the Army National Guard for the past 16 years. He plans to complete at least 20 years. He said his current job duties and his military experience were a natural outgrowth of his B.S. degree in police administration from Eastern Kentucky University.

Tekoah also has a military background, with nearly five years in the U.S. Navy. She was a member of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 74 – the famous "Sea Bees" – where she served in Gulfport, Mississippi; Hawaii, Japan and Puerto Rico. When she came to the Blue Grass Army Depot, she drove locomotive engines, then switched to being a supply technician. She processes paperwork for the movement of ammunition at the depot. "It's a good job for me," she said. "I'm a numbers person." Tekoah is completing her B.A. in

business administration at Eastern Kentucky University.

The Eubanks are Kentucky natives. "There's no reason to go anywhere else," Mike said.

"I love the scenery – the trees, hills and country. And Madison County is a great place for a kid to grow up," said Tekoah.



From left, Tekoah, Bailey and Michael Eubank were recognized by Jim Fritsche during the Groundbreaking Open House as "a family that represents our entire community in a most inspiring and positive way."

team, and trainers. "It's a good place for families," she said.

As a surety specialist, "I'm a compliance officer by nature. My focus is inspecting the programs to make sure they comply with Army regulations," Mike said. "Our work is very important – preparing to destroy the stockpile in an efficient but safe manner. 'Safety for

Photo by Tim Webb



## This Is a Test of the Local Emergency Response System... This Is Only a Test

The Kentucky Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program (CSEPP) conducted a mock exercise on Oct. 25 to test the ability of emergency personnel to respond to a chemical emergency.

Local, state and national CSEPP partners, Blue Grass Army Depot, Blue Grass Chemical Activity, Madison County Emergency Management Agency and the Kentucky Division of Emergency Management participated in the annual community-wide exercise, which was graded by representatives from the Department of Homeland Security and the national CSEPP community.

"Community safety is achieved by working together as a team and practicing to make sure all of the emergency response plans fit together," said Richard Sloan, Blue Grass Chemical Activity public affairs officer.

The CSEPP program is a partnership between the U.S. Army and the Department of Homeland Security. The program was established to enhance emergency preparedness in communities surrounding the chemical stockpiles.

For more information on the Kentucky CSEPP program, visit [www.kentuckycsepp.com](http://www.kentuckycsepp.com).



Nancy Taggart, a photographer for the *Richmond Register*, shoots the treatment being administered to a volunteer "victim" at the mock decontamination station established at Church on the Rock in Berea, Ky.

Photo by U.S. Army

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